

B. Staff Reports and Deputations

B.1 Deputations, if any

None

B.2 Presentation: Cheryl Brine, Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food, and Rural Affairs (“OMAFRA”) and Tim Hendry, Communications and Economic Development Coordinator Re: Economic Development Strategy, OMAFRA Introduction and Workplan

Councillor Bordignon thanked Cheryl Brine, OMAFRA for attending the Economic Development Advisory Committee (“Committee”) meeting. Cheryl provided an overview of OMAFRA, and noted there are currently four (4) divisions, being: Economic Development, Food Safety and Environment, Policy and Research, and Corporate Services. Cheryl noted the Committee will have access to OMAFRA’s Analyst Tool, which is an online tool that pools data from a range of sources to provide information on regional economies and human capital/workforces. The Analyst Tool will assist the Committee, and the Town in understanding what industry sets the region apart from others, and makes it more competitive. OMAFRA provides access and training for economic development programs, assists with stakeholder facilitation, Rural Economic Development (“RED”) Grant Application Coaching, and economic development expertise for rural communities. Councillor Bordignon requested that when the guidelines are approved for the RED grant, they should be forwarded to the Committee.

Communications and Economic Development Coordinator Tim Hendry provided the Economic Development Project Overview, including the objectives. Tim noted the goal is for the Economic Development Strategy (“Strategy”) to be completed by end of 2019. Tim confirmed there are multiple resources that will assist in the development of the Strategy, including: Grey County Economic Development Analytics, OMAFRA Analyst Tool, Census data, Town research, Labour Supply Task Force Report, Small Business Enterprise Centre Small Business Data, Four County Labour Market Planning Board, and the Centre for Business and Economic Development. Tim advised the timeline is tight for completion, but the Committee agreed to stick to the initially approved timeline in an effort to ensure the Strategy is completed in time for the annual budget process.

Cheryl provided a supplementary handout to Committee members that outlined industry data from the Analyst Tool. The Committee reviewed the jobs by industry, labour flows in and out, and the categories for employment.

Tim Newton requested clarification on Cheryl’s availability in relation to Strategy development. Cheryl confirmed that the completion of the Strategy is one of her key deliverables in 2019. Cheryl referenced her prior experience working with Oro Medonte and Wasaga Beach on similar strategies.

Peter thanked Cheryl and Tim for the presentation.

B.3 Public Comment Period (each speaker is allotted three minutes)

NOTE: In accordance with the Town Procedural By-law 2018-20 fifteen minutes is allotted at the Meeting to receive public comments regarding Economic Development Advisory Committee matters included on the Agenda. The speaker shall provide their name and address, and shall address their comments to the Chair. Comments shall not refer to personnel, litigation or potential litigation matters.

None

B.4 Staff Reports

B.4.1 Economic Development Strategy Funding Information, FAF.19.100

Deputy Treasurer/Manager of Accounting and Budgets Sam Dinsmore confirmed that the budget provided for the Economic Development Strategy must be used for the development of the Strategy, and cannot be used for the implementation. Sam confirmed that requests for funding relating to the implementation of the Strategy should be added to budget deliberations.

Moved by: Tony Poole

Seconded by: Andrew Siegart

THAT the Economic Development Advisory Committee receive Staff Report FAF.19.100 entitled "Economic Development Strategy Funding Information" for information purposes, Carried.

Sam Dinsmore left the meeting at 9:35 a.m.

C. Matters for Discussion

C.1 Sub-Committee Update: Economic Development Strategy (verbal)

The Sub-Committee established to work on the Economic Development Strategy provided an update on initial activity. At the initial meeting of the Sub-Committee, the group discussed the work that was previously undertaken by staff and the Committee, including: Business Retention and Expansion, and the Community First Impressions Program. The Sub-Committee also discussed the community's perception of economic development issues. Tim Hendry noted the frustration he hears at the community level regarding the development of a long-range Economic Development Strategy versus fixing immediate concerns by business owners. Tim referenced the delicate balance between long-and-short-term solutions for economic development matters. The Committee discussed community concerns regarding gateway signage, downtown revitalization, and parking. Councillor Bordignon noted that Council, when determining priorities, looks at some of the immediate concerns that can be fixed relatively easily or quickly, as well as a high level issues that involve greater coordination and more long-range planning. Councillor Bordignon reiterated the need to develop four pillars related to economic development, and then build actionable items within the pillars.

Tony Poole noted the importance of short-and-long-range planning and further noted a Retail Gap Analysis is a midterm goal to assist with industry balance. Andrew Siegart noted there are a number of business support groups, including the Thornbury Business Improvement Area, the Clarksburg Village Association, and the Blue Mountain Village Association, that should be leveraged to provide the support business owners require. Andrew noted the Retail Gap Analysis could instead be referred to as a Service Gap Analysis to ensure it is broad enough. Cheryl noted that commercial retail business information, along with quality of life, and healthcare, and a number of other service deliverables, will become evident through the Strategy development.

Nancy Griffin questioned if the various business associations and the Chamber of Commerce have the resources and tools to be able to reach out if businesses are struggling, and provide a level of support. Tony noted the challenge is developing a structure within the various business associations that is complimentary between communities within the Town. Tony agreed that the business associations could give thought to some of the tools business associations can leverage to support a healthy and diverse local economy. Andrew pointed out a recent initiative by the Collingwood Business Improvement Area, "Come Alive at 5" which is geared towards encouraging downtown businesses to stay open later. Andrew noted it is important to consider enhancement of the services/business practices that the consumer wants and further commented the importance of knowing the consumer and having this reflected in the Strategy. Tony noted the Thornbury Business Improvement Area does not currently have the authority under its mandate to make some of these suggested changes, but noted changes to the mandate are being considered.

Cary Eagleson requested that the Committee review some short-term, actionable goals that would support economic development, an example being a shuttle service to manage downtown parking challenges. Mylisa Henderson noted the need for a Roles and Responsibilities Analysis for the Committee to support the various business associations. Specifically, Mylisa noted that there are various issues and priorities amongst various interest groups and business types. The key is focusing on improvements that may assist multiple sectors simultaneously. Tim Hendry noted the concerns from the agricultural sector regarding individuals moving to the rural parts of Town and not understanding the existing rural operations (i.e. frost prevention measures, pesticide use, tractors on roadways, etc.). Tim further noted there has been a request to develop a "Welcome to The Blue Mountains" package which would include a rural versus urban piece. Tim advised he has received requests for information relating to the closure of Clendennan Bridge, and a greater analysis of the impact of closure. Further, Tim has received concern from the business community regarding general brand awareness, management during the Town's shoulder seasons, and the need for attainable housing.

Councillor Bordignon requested that Committee members provide their top priorities for discussion at the Sub-Committee level. Mylisa confirmed the need to define the Four Pillars quickly to ensure tactical strategies and policies can be implemented. Cary noted the need for “quick wins” related to economic development, being: parking, signage, or a shuttle service. Tony reiterated the need for tangible accomplishment by the Committee. Deputy Mayor Bartnicki noted the Committee should be aware of the various research and resources available and ensure discussions that are relevant to other committees (i.e. discussions regarding transportation) should be discussed at a broader level. Andrew emphasized that the Committee needs to understand the demographic of residents and tourists to understand the key segments. Tim Newton reminded the Committee of the important difference between a Business Plan and business planning; there is a difference between responding to a ‘squeaky wheel’ and enacting policies that are beneficial to a large segment of the business community. Tim also emphasized the need to differentiate between reactive and proactive approaches to economic development. Nancy agreed that a shuttle service for the downtown core is a good, short-term solution to parking issues and noted a welcome seminar, beyond the “Welcome to The Blue Mountains” package, that includes information on land stewardship, should be explored.

C.2 Status Update: Communications and Economic Development Project Specialist (verbal)

Tim Hendry advised an offer has been made to an individual who has experience writing economic development strategies. Tim advised the current start date is proposed at the end of July 2019.

C.3 Discussion regarding consideration to appoint EDAC member to Sustainability Committee (verbal)

Councillor Bordignon advised he will raise a Notice of Motion regarding Council consideration to appoint an EDAC member to the Sustainability Committee. He advised he will discuss the matter with Councillor Potter, as one of the chairs of the Sustainability Committee.

C.4 Review of April 24, 2019 Blue Mountain Village Association Deputation material regarding Apple Pie Trail

Note: At the April 24, 2019 Council meeting, Council passed the following motion:

THAT Council acknowledge the BMVA deputation on the Apple Pie Trail, and refer the request for the Apple Pie Trail funding commitment to the E.D.A.C. Committee for consideration.

AND THAT Council direct the Interim CAO, Communications and Economic Development Coordinator and Councillor Bordignon to:

1. develop a strategy for better collaboration between B.M.V.A and the Town on economic issues, and economic and tourism development initiatives in The Town of The Blue Mountains that involve directly or indirectly the BMVA and Blue Mountain Resorts, and
2. report back to Council by September 30, 2019.

AND THAT future funding projects between B.M.V.A. and The Town for economic and tourism development initiatives be referred and flow through the TBM E.D.A.C. Committee, Carried.

Councillor Bordignon read the motion and commented that the Committee as a whole needs to work with Blue Mountain Village Association and other organizations and commit funding on a year-over-year basis. Councillor Bordignon referenced changes to the Grants and Donations structure, and advised that any funding request that is economically-driven will come to the Committee for consideration. Andrew noted putting an initiative such as the Apple Pie Trail through the previous grants and donations process did not highlight the good work done by private organizations, or the public contributions and this direction from Council provides an alternative means for doing so. Mylisa noted the Committee can consider economically-driven events/initiatives in relation to the Four Pillars identified in the Strategy.

C.5 Roundtable Update from Organizations/Committees

C.5.1 The Blue Mountains Agricultural Advisory Committee Update

No update received.

C.5.2 Blue Mountain Village Association Update

No update received.

C.5.3 Blue Mountains Chamber of Commerce Update

No update received.

C.5.4 Clarksburg Village Association Update

No update received.

C.5.5 The Blue Mountains Attainable Housing Corporation Update

No update received.

C.5.6 The Blue Mountains Transportation Committee Update

No appointment made as at July 8, 2019.

C.5.7 The Blue Mountains Sustainability Committee Update

No appointment made as at July 8, 2019.

C.5.8 Small Business Enterprise Centre Update

- Digital Main Street Update
- Summer Company Update

Tim Newton provided an update on Digital Main Street and noted the digital service provider has been out visiting businesses in the past month, with the goal to reach 17 per month. Tim noted there are 120 businesses across the South Georgian Bay Region currently in the Digital Main Street system, and 13 of those have received approval for the grant money. Once the businesses are registered within the system, the digital service provider will reach out and assist the business in enhancing its digital platform. Tony noted he has received some feedback from business owners that they have not gone through the module required because they cannot dedicate the time during retail's busy season. Tim acknowledged that challenge and stated that the return on investment by going through the module is very high. Deputy Mayor Bartnicki advised she has spoken with business owners who have utilized Digital Main Street and have seen huge success.

Tim advised two of the five summer students participating in the Summer Company are from The Blue Mountains and advised the students are broadly focused on assisting with enhancing digital and social media presence and providing brand awareness for local products on a more regional scale. Tim noted the students will receive \$5,000 in grant funding over the summer related to their businesses.

C.5.9 Thornbury Business Improvement Area Update

No update received.

C.5.10 South Georgian Bay Tourism Update

No update received.

C.5.11 Economic Development & Communications Coordinator Update

No update received.

C.5.12 Grey County Economic Development Update

No update received.

D. Correspondence

D.1 Southern Ontario Spotlight, May 2019 Newsletter and Associated Correspondence

Received for information

E. New and Unfinished Business

E.1 Additions to the Agenda

E.2 Items Identified for Discussion at the Next Meeting

E.2.1 Sub-Committee Follow-up

F. Notice of Meeting Dates

August 12, 2019

Town Hall, Council Chambers

G. Adjournment

Moved by: Tony Poole

Seconded by: Odette Bartnicki

THAT the Economic Development Advisory Committee does now adjourn at 10:55 a.m. to meet again at the call of the Chair, Carried.